

dent. The process by which the plates are reproduced is full-tone collotype, making it possible to examine with a magnifying glass the finer structure caught by the camera but not at once evident to the unaided eye.

Edible Wild Plants*

G. T. HASTINGS

David Fairchild, in concluding his book *The World Was My Garden*, says "anyone who will sincerely try can learn to enjoy almost any food." While he was journeying around the world sampling the foods of all peoples, Oliver Medsger has been roaming meadows and woods plains and mountains sampling the native plants that have been or can be used for food. And he has found them good and still adds to his enjoyment of outdoor life by the wild foods he finds. The book in which he records his own experiences as well as information he has gathered regarding the food plants used by the Indians, early settlers, hunters and campers is divided into sections,—wild fruits, nuts, seeds and seed pods, salad plants, roots and tubers, beverage and flavoring plants, sugars and gums. In each section plants from all parts of the United States are described as to their characteristics, the parts used and how they are best prepared. The many personal comments on the plants give the book a pleasantly informal and friendly flavor. But the book impresses one by its completeness and accuracy. The author has consulted Sturtevant's *Notes on Edible Plants* and other works in order to make sure no useful plants are omitted, but the book is entirely Medsger's. Possibly it is an error to speak of the Hog Peanut as a perennial, though it is so described in the standard manuals, as in the region about New York the plant is certainly an annual, growing almost always from the single-seeded, underground fruit described in the book. At the end there is a unique "finding index" in which plants are listed under regional headings,—North Eastern United States, Southern United States, Mississippi to the Rockies, Rockies to the Pacific Coast,—under each of the headings plants are listed as to the parts used for food and for each plant the common and

* *Edible Wild Plants*. Oliver Perry Medsger. The Macmillan Co. 1939. 323 pages, 16 plates. \$3.50.

scientific names, a summary of the characters, the range and season is given. There is also the more conventional index. The book makes good reading, will be valuable for reference, and will undoubtedly influence many who go into the fields and woods to add to their diet some of these plants so commonly neglected.

The Physiology of Plants*

R. C. BENEDICT

“Three qualities have been striven for in the writing of this book; the avoidance of finality of statement; frequent reminders of the bearing of plant physiology on commonplace experiences; and a presentation as readable and fluent as is consistent with scientific accuracy.”

The reviewer is glad to record his judgment that the aims so set forth have been very adequately achieved in this new plant physiology. Probably briefest of all the current texts on the subject, and least exhaustive in its treatment, this book should serve as a satisfactory introduction for an undergraduate course in plant physiology. Consistent with Professor Seifriz's special interest in cellular problems, this volume stresses those phases of the subject which are of “general physiological” significance. The style is clear and simple, the material interesting and recent. Brief bibliographies for each chapter will enable the reader who wishes to go beyond this text to find more exhaustive discussions. In itself, the Seifriz should furnish excellent supplementary reading for students in general botany and general biology classes.

In one particular of treatment, this reviewer would take definite issue with the Seifriz (as with not a few other texts), viz., in the definition and usage of the word, food. “The foods of plants are the same as the foods of animals. Inorganic substances are not foods. To be sure, if a plant containing chlorophyll is supplied with inorganic material only, it will grow normally; but the salts supplied are not food; this is made by the plant.” If the word food means anything, it means building material as well as material which supplies energy. Certainly protoplasm cannot be built without water, both colloiddally and

* Seifriz, William. *The Physiology of Plants*. Wiley 1938. \$3.50.